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December 15, 2009

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"Life-altering health care decisions should be made by a woman and her doctor, not by the government, insurance companies, or any other outside influences," said Rep. Melancon. "Insurance companies should not deny or reduce coverage for routine mammogram screenings for women based on general recommendations from an independent panel of health care providers.

"Mammograms have saved the lives of countless women, and I will continue working to make sure that screenings are available and affordable to any woman who needs one. And until we find a cure, I will keep fighting for better prevention and more research funding to eradicate this devastating disease."

In November, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), an independent panel of primary care clinicians, issued new breast cancer screening guidelines. These guidelines reflect a change from the USPSTF's 2002 mammography recommendations, causing concern among many women and their health providers.

The resolution passed by the House today, H. Res. 971, underscores the sense of the House that the USPSTF recommendations should not be used by insurers to deny women coverage for routine screenings. The resolution also makes clear that the new recommendations do not in any way prohibit an insurer from providing more extensive mammography services than those recommended by the USPSTF.

Finally, the resolution urges the National Cancer Institute to continue to invest and provide leadership regarding research to develop more effective screening tools and strategies for improving detection of breast cancer.

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